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Subject: AP: Regulator: Pipeline permits have no link to Cooper agreement

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BY GARY D. ROBERTSON, Associated Press

Updated 1 hour 3 minutes ago

RALEIGH, N.C.—A North Carolina environmental regulator says a separate monetary agreement reached by Gov. Roy Cooper's office with developers of a multistate natural gas pipeline had nothing to do with her department's decisions on key project permits.

Assistant Secretary for the Environment Sheila Holman answered questions Tuesday from the General Assembly's energy policy committee about where things stand on approving the Atlantic Coast Pipeline through eastern North Carolina.

GOP legislators have criticized Cooper's deal in which Dominion Resources, Duke Energy and other utilities would pay \$58 million for environmental mitigation, renewable energy and economic development projects along the pipeline route. The legislature passed a law to send that money to area school districts instead.

Cooper has strongly denied Republican arguments that the \$58 million was a condition for permit approvals.